

WASHINGTON (April 29) – Congressman Spencer Bachus (AL-6) today joined a group led by President Obama and Governor Robert Bentley in visiting tornado-ravaged neighborhoods in Tuscaloosa as part of his continuing tour of the historic storm damage in Alabama.

“It was important for the President and the nation to see the tremendous amount of tornado damage here in Alabama, and we appreciate his visit. Our first need is to bring relief to people who are continuing to suffer and who have lost their homes, businesses, and tragically even their loved ones. But we must now begin the long process of rebuilding and recovery. One thing that has struck me even in communities which sustained the most devastation is a spirit of resiliency, hope, and faith, and that is what will see us through,” Bachus said.

The toll of the disaster throughout the State of Alabama is still being tallied. As of noon Friday, the number of lost lives stood at 228. The substantial economic costs to the state have yet to be officially estimated.

Bachus has spent the last two days touring areas throughout the hard-hit Sixth District, personally inspecting the storm damage in communities in counties including Jefferson, Shelby, St. Clair, and Tuscaloosa.

“It is important to remember the damage has occurred throughout the entire state, not just in large and well-known cities. Places like Ohatchee, Concord, Hackleburg, Phil Campbell, the Shoal Creek community in St. Clair County, Rainsville, Cordova, Holt, and many others have suffered devastating losses,” Bachus said.

Congressman Bachus hailed the work of local officials, police and firefighters, and volunteers in rallying to support their communities and observed the importance of early warning systems.

“The loss of life from these tornadoes would have been even worse if it was not for early warnings that allowed people to leave their homes and seek safe shelters. Many people who were in the eye of the storm are alive today because they heeded the warnings they heard on the television, radio, or their weather radios and found shelter. That is one encouraging piece of news that we can take away from this overwhelming event,” Bachus said.

Bachus and the Alabama congressional delegation joined in seeking an immediate federal disaster declaration for Alabama, which was approved by the President. The declaration frees up federal resources and funding for state and local response efforts. The Small Business Administration today announced disaster assistance programs for citizens in Jefferson, Tuscaloosa, Bibb, Shelby, and St. Clair counties.

Information on federal assistance programs is available on Congressman Bachus' website, www.bachus.house.gov